

Archival Review Board

Meeting Minutes

December 17, 2014, 10:30 a.m. 31 Chambers Street

Members Attending: Ian Bassin, Marci Reaven, Christopher Moore

For the Department of Records & Information Services: Pauline Toole, Commissioner, Kenneth Cobb, Assistant Commissioner, Sylvia Kollar, Director, Municipal Archives

Commissioner Toole convened the meeting at 10:30 a.m. She announced that the meeting was being videotaped in compliance with the open-meetings law and that within 72 hours the video would be posted on the DORIS website. In future, meetings will be live-streamed.

Agenda:

I. Introductions

Board members and DORIS staff introduced themselves:

- 1) Commissioner Toole. Appointed agency Commissioner in March 2014; described the agency mission.
- 2) Ian Bassin, Deputy Counsel to the Mayor; previously served in the Obama administration.
- 3) Sylvia Kollar, Municipal Archives director since July 2014; previously employed as a consulting archivist with the Winthrop Group.
- 4) Christopher Moore; retiring from the New York Public Library. Landmarks Preservation Commission member since 1995.
- 5) Kenneth Cobb, Assistant Commissioner since 2005; previously director of Municipal Archives.
- 6) Marci Reaven, Vice-President and Curator of history exhibits at the New York Historical Society.

Commissioner Toole noted that ARB member Richard K. Lieberman was unable to attend the meeting due to the death of Steven Levine, staff member of the LaGuardia and Wagner Archives. She added that the LaGuardia Archives have the papers of the City Council and were processing them according to archival standards.

II. Review of composition, role and responsibilities of the ARB:

Commissioner Toole provided a brief history of the Board and noted that the law stated meetings should take place quarterly and members would serve 4-year terms.

III. Report and discussion on accession of historical records of City officers

ARB members reviewed the Accession Report documenting materials received between January and November 2014. Commissioner Toole stated that all paper records and gifts of the Bloomberg administration had been transferred to the Archives and added she was confident that the IT team at City Hall had transferred to the Archives all electronic records in their possession. The Law Department is currently conducting a privilege review of the Bloomberg materials. Once completed, Archives would begin processing activities; Archives has not previously accessioned or processed “born-digital” materials. Archives will use the consultant report produced by NYU ca. 2009 as a guide and would be setting standards and protocols for future accessions of electronic records.

Commissioner Toole also stated that records of the Comptroller and Public Advocate would also be appraised and accessioned.

Marci Reaven asked how records are accessioned by the Archives. Kenneth Cobb explained that most records were transferred via the records management program in accordance with established record retention schedules. Commissioner Toole described the current protocol that requires sign-off from agency commissioner, DORIS commissioner, Law Department and the municipal archivist prior to disposition of any city record (disposition for historically important records means transfer to Archives). She added that a group of city record managers had been convened to develop best practices as agencies move away from paper to electronic record-keeping.

IV. Annual Report

Commissioner Toole asked for comments on the draft annual report.

Ian Bassin suggested amplification of the section on budget cuts and asked if the lack of climate controls at the off-site facility in Bush Terminal put materials at risk. Sylvia Kollar answered that the collections are at risk, but stable. Mr. Bassin suggested additional description of those risks. Commissioner Toole added that DCAS had hired a real estate broker to solicit new space (or possibly upgrading of existing space) for off-site storage of archival records.

Marci Reaven suggested using less jargon in the report and that non-profits should be added to the list of users. Commissioner Toole said the report should also include a list of recent loans and use (books, etc.) of archival materials.

Ms. Reaven and Mr. Bassin both suggested that the processing summaries could be written with more description. Ms. Reaven also said that no. 2 summary should start with “Staff” and not just DORIS. Mr. Bassin observed that the collections processed by Archives seemed random; Kenneth Cobb explained that many were continuations of previous projects, building larger collections, e.g. records of criminal justice and Board of Education.

Sylvia Kollar suggested adding to the report a section describing the on-line launch of selected digitized New Amsterdam records. Commissioner Toole added that this should also highlight the maps and images contributed by the Library.

Kenneth Cobb briefly described the vital record scanning project and said that would also be added to the report.

Commissioner Toole said the revised draft would be circulated to ARB members for further comments and suggestions prior to submission to the Mayor and publication via the new portal.

V. Topics for the next meeting discussion

Commissioner Toole suggested that the Archives project master plan list should be shared with the Board for their input at the next meeting. Ian Bassin suggested increasing outreach efforts—more people should know about the Archives. Commissioner Toole noted that there is a Presidential Records Act at the federal level that might serve as a guide for developing our own best practices and standards.

Marci Reaven asked what other responsibilities the board had aside from the report. Commissioner Toole explained how it had been established after Mayor Giuliani hired a private contractor to process his records. The creating legislation gave the Board oversight over any future contracting of processing activities. DORIS does not contemplate outsourcing any additional processing activities at this time.

Next Meeting

Commissioner Toole suggested the third Thursday of each quarter, at 10:30. The next meeting would be March 18, 2015. Meeting notices would be sent.

Minutes from the March 18, 2015 Meeting
of the Archival Review Board

Attending: Members, Ian Bassin, Richard Lieberman, Christopher Moore, and Marci Reaven. Commissioner Pauline Toole, Assistant Commissioner Kenneth Cobb and Municipal Archivist Sylvia Kollar.

Commissioner Pauline Toole called the meeting to order, announced that the proceedings would be live-streamed and taped.

The minutes of the previous meeting (December 17, 2014) were approved and will be posted online.

Agenda item 1, the Archival Review Board report for the period 2009 through 2014.

All agreed that the draft report was clearer and much improved.

Richard Lieberman noted that the LaGuardia Wagner Archives use the Google analytics tools to provide information about their audience and recommended it.

Commissioner Toole noted that DORIS was just beginning to publish digital content online and that the Google tool would undoubtedly be useful once more material is published.

Marci Reaven asked about the significance of the 1952 founding date cited in paragraph #3 and offsite storage facilities.

Kenneth Cobb responded that the archival collections had been initially assembled in the Municipal Library, by Director Rebecca Rankin during her tenure from the 1920s to the early 1950s. The Municipal Archives as a named institution was not established until 1952.

Agenda item 2, records lost at the CitiStorage fire. Some entities that lost records, such as public authorities follow state guidelines regarding record retention and are not under jurisdiction of DORIS. The quantity of records destroyed appeared to be less than originally estimated because many city agencies had moved their records to GRM in accordance with the City's requirement contract. The biggest loss appeared to be court records Cobb stated the MA had over the last three decades assembled the most comprehensive collection of records pertaining to the administration of criminal justice in the English-speaking world. And the possible loss of Manhattan Supreme Court criminal court records dating from the 1940s would be significant.

Commissioner Toole said DORIS, the FDNY and the Buildings Department were surveying all agency off-site facilities and assessing their fire suppression systems, in particular, as well as general conditions. Ian Bassin asked for an update at the next meeting.

Agenda Item 3 Reorganizing practices for accessioning historical records and discussion of the project master list.

Sylvia Kollar explained that the archival process was in the beginning stages. She was studying the accession policy, reviewing databases and comparing them to paper inventories; tracking agency name changes, identifying gaps in series, comparing with retention schedules and will update as needed. The Archives will be using ArchiveSpace as the technology tool and will prepare for the influx of electronic records and will be following the Describing Archives Content Standard (DACS), the official standard of the archival community. Training staff would be the key to success; she also is developing protocols for digital collections.

Commissioner Toole said educating NYC agency leadership about records management was important and something that DORIS was working on with agency record managers.

Richard Lieberman stated the importance of prioritizing processing / cataloging / preservation activities: “there is what we want to do and then there is reality.” He suggested that the Archives should identify what is most important, and then determine which collections are most at risk. He suggested that the MA start with the records that really tell the story of NYC and to consider setting priorities by making physical preservation the primary criteria.

Ian Bassin noted that we would most likely find records everywhere and supported prioritizing those most at risk.

Marci Reaven asked if the list of priority projects could be updated.

Ian Bassin suggested that a preservation status column be added to the list. He also asked about electronic records from the 1990s. None have been accessioned yet.

Commissioner Toole noted that many collections have been accessioned but not processed; the Mayoral material will always be a priority but there may be other important agency records in need of processing and solicited suggestions which included the New Amsterdam collection, Mayor Walker, Mayor LaGuardia, The Human Rights Commission, the Marine Court naturalizations.

Reaven suggested that the researcher registration list might inform decisions about collections prioritized for processing.

Agenda Item 4 Processing the Bloomberg collection

Kollar said processing the collection would be a multi-phased operation: Phase 1- survey; Phase 2 - prioritizing; Phase 3 - processing; Phase 4 – public access using ArchiveSpace and Fedora (the repository for digital content).

Richard Lieberman asked if we had everything [from the Bloomberg administration].

Commissioner Toole said the Archives had accessioned all paper records stored at 111 White Street and 40 terrabytes of electronic records, photos, and videos maintained by City Hall IT and DOITT. The

Lieberman suggested MA consider asking people who served during the Bloomberg administration to serve as consultants during processing. He said they can be helpful as per his experience at the LaGuardia Archives with former members of the Koch administration.

Commissioner Toole expected processing would take 18 months and

Richard Lieberman suggested doubling the time period.

Marci Reaven asked if MA had the funding to process and Commissioner Toole said we will have to fund-raise.

Kenneth Cobb provided an update on vital scanning project, noting that all marriage record had been digitized.

Richard Lieberman said he was impressed; the agency was doing a good job.

Commissioner Toole adjourned the meeting.

Archival Review Board
June 15, 2016
31 Chambers Street, Suite 305, 10:30 a.m.
Meeting Minutes

Attending: Members, Kiren Gopal, Christopher Moore and Richard Lieberman. Commissioner Pauline Toole, Assistant Commissioner Kenneth Cobb, Municipal Archivist Sylvia Kollar, and attorney Susan Damplo.

Commissioner Toole called the meeting to order and announced that it was not mandatory to videotape the proceedings, but since the ARB had agreed to record their meetings we would continue to do so.

Commissioner Toole informed the Board that member Marci Reaven had resigned and that she was awaiting the announcement of a new appointee from the Mayor.

Agenda item 1, Review and adopt minutes.

Commissioner Toole asked if there were any questions or comments regarding the March 18, 2016 meeting minutes; the motion to approve the minutes was adopted.

Agenda item 2, ARB Annual Report – discussion of collections processed for inclusion in report.

Sylvia Kollar reviewed the list of “Archival Processing Projects” proposed for inclusion in the report. She explained that the current goal was to gain intellectual control, at least at the collection level, to the Archives’ holdings. She added that the processing activities included item cleaning and re-housing, inventorying, and labeling. The volume of material in the list totaled 1,600 cubic feet (not including the grant-funded projects).

Commissioner Toole added that processing was a continuum, with descriptions evolving from the basic collection or series level, to box level, then folder level and in some cases item level.

Richard Lieberman asked what “extent” meant and Ms. Kollar explained it was a calculation of the quantity of space the collection occupied on the shelf. She pointed to a cubic-foot box on the table as an example. She explained that for the purposes of the ARB annual report, collections will be listed by type of activity. The report will also include images from the processed collections.

Richard Lieberman said that his team at the LaGuardia and Wagner Archives had been processing and digitizing the City Council's "Local Law" bill jackets, or folders, making it a priority due to the value of its intellectual content. There were gaps in his collection and he suggested the Municipal Archives collection of Mayoral bill jackets might complete the series. He proposed a joint project that would be beneficial for both institutions.

Commissioner Toole answered that a collaborative project would be of interest and suggested the joint project the Archives had launched with its counterpart in the City of Amsterdam in the Netherlands, to share information about the early "Dutch" records, could serve as a model.

Sylvia Kollar passed around to the Board members copies of photographs from the NY Police Department crime scene collection currently being processed with funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the New York State Local Government Records Management Improvement Fund. She also shared photographs of the Almshouse ledgers recently re-housed and digitized with funding from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission. Ms. Kollar included a sample of a deteriorated nitrate negative for the members to examine.

Christopher Moore asked if the Archives had "cartes-de-visite" type images in its collection. Commissioner Toole answered that the answer was probably not, but as collections were processed, perhaps some would be found.

Agenda item 3, Report on Bloomberg Administration Records.

Commissioner Toole reported that there had been progress since the March meeting when the Board had proposed sending a letter to the former Mayor urging that the email records held on Bloomberg.net servers be turned over to the Archives. The letter was not sent.

Kiren Gopal added that he and Stephen Louis, Chief of Legal Counsel at the Law Department had made contact with a representative from the former Mayor and they were working to identify the former City officials and their emails on Bloomberg.net.

Commissioner Toole added that many of the officials mixed City business with personal or other business emails and it would be necessary to separate the City messages. She added that the Archives should have all emails of all City officials. The hard-copy records of the Bloomberg administration were stored at 111 White Street and that the Municipal Archives had assigned an archivist to begin processing this material to the folder-level. The analogous electronic records were being reviewed by Law Department attorneys for attorney/client privilege prior to release to the Archives. The email records from 2002 had been completed and transferred to the Archives and the 2003 messages would soon be finished and transferred. The Bloomberg photo archive had already been transferred.

Richard Lieberman mentioned that records from the Giuliani administration pertaining to 9/11 and its aftermath appeared to be “missing.” He quoted Kenneth Cobb’s theory that this was not surprising given that many officials were dislocated from their offices, and records of the time period would most likely be identified within the early Bloomberg material.

Commissioner Toole said that it is possible that these records will indeed turn-up at 111 White Street as that was the Mayor’s “Record Center” during the Giuliani administration.

Professor Lieberman emphasized the importance of this material, and suggested that it be of the highest priority.

Commissioner Toole added that the Archives was also in the process of accessioning agency commissioner records and valuable material on this subject was likely to be identified.

Commissioner Toole explained that legislation was being drafted to improve the somewhat vague current process, e.g. DORIS shall “take possession” of mayoral records. Modeled on the Presidential Records Act, the amended legislation would make the process smoother and more transparent. She expected to have the draft available for review before the next Board meeting in September.

Agenda item 4, EAD Creator Demonstration.

Ms. Kollar demonstrated the EAD (encoded archival description) protocol that she was developing to describe the Archives’ collections. She explained that it will be versatile and easily migrated to future platforms as they inevitably evolve.

Commissioner Toole closed the meeting with a recommendation that Board members might enjoy touring the latest exhibition, “Little Syria,” in the Visitor Center.

Minutes from the September 16, 2015 Meeting of the Archival Review Board

Attending: Members, Ian Bassin, Richard Lieberman, Christopher Moore, and Marci Reaven. Commissioner Pauline Toole, Assistant Commissioner Kenneth Cobb and Municipal Archivist Sylvia Kollar.

Commissioner Pauline Toole called the meeting to order, announced that the proceedings would be live-streamed and taped.

The minutes of the previous meeting (March 18, 2014) were approved and will be posted online.

Agenda item 1, Report on Accession

- Overview of 1800 cf of accessions by the Municipal Archives including Voter Registration Books, and Women's Activism initiatives.
- Report on evaluating and inventorying Collections including Commissioner records for all agencies as a starting point. The focus is to consider how the Archives can impact regular New Yorkers when we identify gaps in our collections.
- Recent records will be digital, and the MA is determining resources required to both preserve and make collections available.
- Commissioner Toole explained the protocols in accessioning collections from other agencies. Lieberman suggested the possible focus on housing, and the importance of celebrating even the small advances and the work we do. Reaven inquired about the how other agencies are trained in recognizing the importance of it, and Bassin inquired about whether RMOs are responsible for items in the schedule and the protocols in place when the transfers to the MA occur. Commissioner Toole explained that we are beginning to provide agencies with the guidance required identify, track, and transfer records to the Archives.

Agenda item 2, Report on Bloomberg Collections

- Commissioner Toole noted the significant difference of Bloomberg administration being both paper and digital. Acquisition of digital records did not follow any industry standard procedure. Going forward, the MA is establishing standards and protocols on accessioning digital collections.
- Commissioner Toole explained the practice in making Bloomberg administration records available to reporters:
 - Law Dept. review for Attorney-Client privilege, listing items that should not be made available
 - MA staff reviews for PPI

In addition, the MA staff is identifying key players in the administration whose records would be priorities for processing.

Lieberman suggested interviewing those key players for insight on the records, and the fact that photographs, video and film should be priorities because that is

the most requested content. Privacy review requires intensive labor and can be done on a request basis.

Agenda Item 3, Electronic Records Processing

- A conversation about the value of the email and how researchers use and review email ensued. Reaven noted the importance of taking into consideration the way researchers work, and getting intellectual control of the topics is important. Liberman noted he does not have the staff to take on managing emails. Bassin noted the importance of email as the place where work happens, and where work is documented. Moving towards creating the equivalent of the presidential records act for NYC government is important. Bassin continued to stress the importance of preparing the capacity to handle digital content since the future is moving toward everyone working on tablets. Commissioner Toole would have share a draft at the next meeting.

Agenda Item 4, ArchivesSpace Report

- Kollar reported on archivists working on priority collections, reviewing, editing, and creating complete DACS compliant EAD finding aids. Working on identifying various descriptions standards for collections that will become part of processing protocols. Kollar reported on the work of editing and updating the accessions database for import into AS.

Agenda Item 5, Warehouse Inspections

- Commissioner Toole updated the Board reporting 7 warehouses had violations. The teams conducting the inspections is excellent. Records Managers are working with Agencies to reduce retention periods and number of records stored at warehouses. Bassin noted that similar issues may arise in 5-10 years, and that perhaps records managers need to confirm with DORIS that facilities are protected from disaster. Lieberman commented on the importance of disaster planning and preparedness. Commissioner Toole noted the preference of moving records to professional storage facilities that abide by stricter standards, like GRM.

Once agenda items were concluded, Commissioner Toole asked if anyone had any questions or comments. Reaven asked about the work of reducing retention periods and Commissioner Toole reported the City's retention schedules have not been updated since the 1980s, and DORIS is coordinating agencies to adopt the State's schedule.

The next meeting was tentatively set for December 2, and an email would confirm date.

Archival Review Board
March 16, 2016
31 Chambers Street, Suite 305, 10:30 a.m.
Meeting Minutes

Attending: Members, Kiren Gopal, Christopher Moore, and Marci Reaven. Commissioner Pauline Toole, Assistant Commissioner Kenneth Cobb and Municipal Archivist Sylvia Kollar. Member Richard Lieberman was not able to attend.

Commissioner Pauline Toole called the meeting to order; she announced that it was not mandatory to videotape the proceedings, but we would do so anyway. Unfortunately, there were technical difficulties and it was not recorded.

Commissioner Toole introduced Kiren Gopal as one of the two mayoral appointees, replacing Ian Bassin. Mr. Gopal is an attorney in the Office of Counsel to the Mayor and among other responsibilities he has been working with DORIS on the “OpenRecords” Foil initiative.

Agenda item 1, Municipal Archives Accession Report, April – December 2015.

The accession report was provided to the Board and Ms. Kollar pointed out a few highlights:

- Gracie Mansion has established the Municipal Archives as a repository, and donated various artifacts and documents;
- Artifacts from Ebbett’s Field have been received from the Brooklyn Historical Society.
- NYPD Special Investigations Unit records, a.k.a. “Handschu” collection. Handschu was the lead plaintiff in a class-action lawsuit brought against the NYPD in the 1970s, contending that their surveillance of lawful groups and meetings was wrong. The collection comprises the records compiled by the NYPD’s special investigation unit from the 1950s to the early 1970s when the N. Y. State Supreme Court ruled in favor of the plaintiffs and curtailed NYPD surveillance activities.

Commissioner Toole added that the Ebbett’s Field items, a mitt and a seat from the stadium, had been originally gifted to Borough President

Markowitz who then inappropriately donated the items to the Brooklyn Historical Society. As a City official, he was obligated to offer them to the Municipal Archives, but failed to do so. Commissioner Toole said this highlighted another on-going issue that was now being addressed—the lack of agency commissioner-level records in the Archives. With regard to the Handschu material, she noted that the material had long thought to have been lost, but they were found in a recent inventory at the Records Center

Marci Reaven remarked that the collection may be useful for the upcoming New-York Historical Society exhibition on the Vietnam War.

Agenda Item no. 2, Processing Projects

Ms. Kollar gave an overview of current processing projects:

- Bush Terminal “pallet project” – an inventory of 74 pallets of mixed ledger volumes; the majority of which were not archival. Kenneth Cobb explained that the ledgers had been pulled out of the basement of the Municipal Building in the 1980s and 90s without appraisal after receiving word from building management that the basement contents would be “disposed” within a day unless Archives took the material. It was recognized that most of the ledgers had no historical value, and a later inventory would be conducted to identify the few that did. Sylvia Kollar added that only approximately 10% of the ledgers had archival value. She said the project was being conducted by archivist Marcia Kirk who was documenting the process. Commissioner Toole also noted that this work was necessary prior to the move to the new facility so as not to have to transport material that has no value.

Mr. Moore asked if any of the items would be digitized.

Commissioner Toole replied that they would not be initially, pending further review. Ms. Kollar added that samples of items disposed would be kept.

Kenneth Cobb noted that several significant items had been identified, for example, the abstract of conveyance ledgers, indexed by block number. Commissioner Toole relayed that a recent request from the Mayor’s Office for documentation concerning the “Colored

Orphan Asylum” had been resolved with pages from the ledgers in this series.

Commissioner Toole reiterated that we were following a three-step archival review process: initial separation of archival from non-archival by archivist Marcia Kirk; secondary review by Ms. Kollar and a final review by Mr. Cobb to confirm the decisions.

- “Almshouse” ledger project funded by the National Historical Records & Publications Commission—processing and digitizing the collection of records pertaining to various institutions formerly located on Blackwell’s Island.
- Additional projects described by Ms. Kollar included processing records pertaining to former Commissioners of DORIS to document the agency history; processing Manhattan building department construction permit folders; and cataloging a series of insolvency assignment records dating from the 19th century.

Commissioner Toole noted that three additional archivist positions had been secured in the new budget. Ms. Kollar added that these were higher-level positions that would include supervision of interns and other subordinates to maximize productivity.

Agenda Item #3: Report on Bloomberg Records Collection:

Commissioner Toole discussed the New York Daily News article describing the Bloomberg.net email records that had been maintained on non-City servers. She explained continuing efforts with the Law Department to secure the emails. She said the Charter gives DORIS clear authority over the records.

In a related initiative, Commissioner Toole described efforts to draft amendments to the Charter related to the transfer and acquisition of mayoral papers based on the federal Presidential Records Act. The most important change will be to compel the creating office (i.e. Mayor) to provide their official records to DORIS, rather than the current language which directs the Archives to “acquire” material.

Ms. Kollar explained that processing of the paper records will take place at the box and folder level and that she is working with the Law Department to develop a protocol to process and access email records. The Law Department will provide guidance to processing archivists so that they can identify records protected by “attorney/client” privilege.

Commissioner Toole related that the Law Department was currently reviewing email records of the top decision-makers in the Bloomberg administration. They are clearing the material for public access. To date, the emails of 2002 have been cleared.

The discussion returned to the Bloomberg.net records and Ms. Reaven asked if there was something that the Board could do to be helpful. She suggested perhaps a letter to the former mayor from the Board could be drafted.

Ms. Kollar continued with a description of the planned implementation of ArchivesSpace and the use of EAD (the international description standard) to prepare inventories for public access. She said that 14 collection descriptions, describing 6,000 cubic feet of material was ready to be loaded into the application.

Commissioner Toole closed the meeting and asked members to mark June 15 on their calendars for the next meeting.

Archival Review Board
June 15, 2016
31 Chambers Street, Suite 305, 10:30 a.m.
Meeting Minutes

Attending: Members, Kiren Gopal, Christopher Moore and Richard Lieberman. Commissioner Pauline Toole, Assistant Commissioner Kenneth Cobb, Municipal Archivist Sylvia Kollar, and attorney Susan Damplo.

Commissioner Toole called the meeting to order and announced that it was not mandatory to videotape the proceedings, but since the ARB had agreed to record their meetings we would continue to do so.

Commissioner Toole informed the Board that member Marci Reaven had resigned and that she was awaiting the announcement of a new appointee from the Mayor.

Agenda item 1, Review and adopt minutes.

Commissioner Toole asked if there were any questions or comments regarding the March 18, 2016 meeting minutes; the motion to approve the minutes was adopted.

Agenda item 2, ARB Annual Report – discussion of collections processed for inclusion in report.

Sylvia Kollar reviewed the list of “Archival Processing Projects” proposed for inclusion in the report. She explained that the current goal was to gain intellectual control, at least at the collection level, to the Archives’ holdings. She added that the processing activities included item cleaning and re-housing, inventorying, and labeling. The volume of material in the list totaled 1,600 cubic feet (not including the grant-funded projects).

Commissioner Toole added that processing was a continuum, with descriptions evolving from the basic collection or series level, to box level, then folder level and in some cases item level.

Richard Lieberman asked what “extent” meant and Ms. Kollar explained it was a calculation of the quantity of space the collection occupied on the shelf. She pointed to a cubic-foot box on the table as an example. She explained that for the purposes of the ARB annual report, collections will be listed by type of activity. The report will also include images from the processed collections.

Richard Lieberman said that his team at the LaGuardia and Wagner Archives had been processing and digitizing the City Council's "Local Law" bill jackets, or folders, making it a priority due to the value of its intellectual content. There were gaps in his collection and he suggested the Municipal Archives collection of Mayoral bill jackets might complete the series. He proposed a joint project that would be beneficial for both institutions.

Commissioner Toole answered that a collaborative project would be of interest and suggested the joint project the Archives had launched with its counterpart in the City of Amsterdam in the Netherlands, to share information about the early "Dutch" records, could serve as a model.

Sylvia Kollar passed around to the Board members copies of photographs from the NY Police Department crime scene collection currently being processed with funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the New York State Local Government Records Management Improvement Fund. She also shared photographs of the Almshouse ledgers recently re-housed and digitized with funding from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission. Ms. Kollar included a sample of a deteriorated nitrate negative for the members to examine.

Christopher Moore asked if the Archives had "cartes-de-visite" type images in its collection. Commissioner Toole answered that the answer was probably not, but as collections were processed, perhaps some would be found.

Agenda item 3, Report on Bloomberg Administration Records.

Commissioner Toole reported that there had been progress since the March meeting when the Board had proposed sending a letter to the former Mayor urging that the email records held on Bloomberg.net servers be turned over to the Archives. The letter was not sent.

Kiren Gopal added that he and Stephen Louis, Chief of Legal Counsel at the Law Department had made contact with a representative from the former Mayor and they were working to identify the former City officials and their emails on Bloomberg.net.

Commissioner Toole added that many of the officials mixed City business with personal or other business emails and it would be necessary to separate the City messages. She added that the Archives should have all emails of all City officials. The hard-copy records of the Bloomberg administration were stored at 111 White Street and that the Municipal Archives had assigned an archivist to begin processing this material to the folder-level. The analogous electronic records were being reviewed by Law Department attorneys for attorney/client privilege prior to release to the Archives. The email records from 2002 had been completed and transferred to the Archives and the 2003 messages would soon be finished and transferred. The Bloomberg photo archive had already been transferred.

Richard Lieberman mentioned that records from the Giuliani administration pertaining to 9/11 and its aftermath appeared to be “missing.” He quoted Kenneth Cobb’s theory that this was not surprising given that many officials were dislocated from their offices, and records of the time period would most likely be identified within the early Bloomberg material.

Commissioner Toole said that it is possible that these records will indeed turn-up at 111 White Street as that was the Mayor’s “Record Center” during the Giuliani administration.

Professor Lieberman emphasized the importance of this material, and suggested that it be of the highest priority.

Commissioner Toole added that the Archives was also in the process of accessioning agency commissioner records and valuable material on this subject was likely to be identified.

Commissioner Toole explained that legislation was being drafted to improve the somewhat vague current process, e.g. DORIS shall “take possession” of mayoral records. Modeled on the Presidential Records Act, the amended legislation would make the process smoother and more transparent. She expected to have the draft available for review before the next Board meeting in September.

Agenda item 4, EAD Creator Demonstration.

Ms. Kollar demonstrated the EAD (encoded archival description) protocol that she was developing to describe the Archives’ collections. She explained that it will be versatile and easily migrated to future platforms as they inevitably evolve.

Commissioner Toole closed the meeting with a recommendation that Board members might enjoy touring the latest exhibition, “Little Syria,” in the Visitor Center.

Archival Review Board
November 9, 2016
31 Chambers Street, Suite 305, 10:30 a.m.
Meeting Minutes

Attending: Members, Kiren Gopal, Christopher Moore and Yasmin Ramirez; Commissioner Pauline Toole, Assistant Commissioner Kenneth Cobb, Municipal Archives Director Sylvia Kollar, and attorney Susan Damplo.

Commissioner Toole called the meeting to order and announced that it was not mandatory to videotape the proceedings, but since the ARB had agreed to record their meetings, we would continue to do so.

Agenda Item 1: Review and adopt minutes:

Commissioner Toole asked if there were any questions regarding the June 15, 2016 ARB meeting minutes. None were voiced. Commissioner Toole asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the June 15, 2016 meeting. The motion was approved.

Agenda Item 2: Introductions:

Commissioner Toole noted that member Richard Lieberman was unable to attend due to a family emergency. She welcomed new member Yasmin Ramirez and asked the attending members to introduce themselves.

Agenda item 3, Collections Processed in 2015 – Poster:

Sylvia Kollar reported on collections processed in 2015. She circulated to the members the poster-version of the report showing the continuum of how collections are processed, e.g. from the collection level, down through the series, and in some instances, the item level. The calendar will be posted on the agency website and entered into the publications portal. She explained that the purpose of the poster was to indicate the varying levels of work necessary to process collections. Commissioner Toole added that the City Charter requires the ARB to produce this report. Yasmin Ramirez suggested that an overall description of the collections would be helpful to understanding the context. She added that a list of new accessions would be also useful. Ms. Kollar said that collection-level description was the first and most essential priority. Ms. Ramirez further added that an indication of the desired level of processing would be helpful.

Commissioner Toole added that for two decades the Archives struggled with budget cuts and had only recently hired new archivists, but had always continued to accession records. Ms. Ramirez concurred that descriptions were essential, even if only at the collection level.

Kenneth Cobb pointed out that for some collections, such as the massive New York District Attorney's closed case files, the additional descriptive information was minimal and would cover thousands of cubic feet of material.

Agenda item 4, Records of citywide officials:

Sylvia Kollar said that the archivists were appraising more than 700 cubic feet of records created by citywide officials for potential archival value.

Agenda item 5, Report on Bloomberg administration e-mail records:

Commissioner Toole reported that there had been progress since the previous meeting and that the Law Department had reviewed e-mail records for attorney/client privilege for the first three years of the Bloomberg administration. The Bloomberg.net e-mail records were being reviewed by outside counsel to segregate City-business from personal, prior to transfer to the Archives. Kiren Gopal added that the process will start with the former mayor and then his top assistants.

In closing the meeting Commissioner Toole asked if there were questions or other new business. None were expressed and the meeting was adjourned.

Archival Review Board
May 11, 2017, 2 p.m.
(via telephone conference call)
Meeting Minutes

Participating: Members, Richard Lieberman, Kiren Gopal, Christopher Moore, and Yasmin Ramirez; Commissioner Pauline Toole, Assistant Commissioner Kenneth Cobb.

Agenda Item 1: Review and adopt minutes:

Assistant Commissioner Cobb asked if there were any questions or comments regarding the November 9, 2016 ARB meeting minutes. None were voiced. He asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the November 9, 2016 meeting. The motion was approved.

Agenda Item 2: Archival Review Board Report 2016:

Mr. Cobb asked for comments regarding the draft report that had been previously circulated by email.

Kiren Gopal suggested that highlights from the series acquired would enhance the report.

Commissioner Toole responded by noting that the acquired materials had been only recently transferred into the Archives and until processing commenced, their contents were not known. She suggested that highlights could be added to the Processing section of the report.

Mr. Gopal asked what were the new storage room conditions referenced in the Preservation section of the report.

Commissioner Toole said that one of the Archives' storage rooms, B-2, had been re-organized, and cleaned and that materials were placed in new containers. She added that HVAC conduits had been replaced.

Mr. Gopal noted a typographical error on page 5 (using).

Yasmin Ramirez suggested that the report could be improved by providing an overall description of the Archives and how they are made accessible to the public. This would provide context for the details of the report.

Commissioner Toole further noted that the "poster"-style report previously prepared did not provide enough context and suggested that this revised style addressed that deficiency. She said imagery will be added to the report. She suggested that the report should be finalized and submitted to the Mayor the week of 5 June. ARB members will receive the revised draft by the end of May and will have about a week to submit their comments, etc.

5/11/17 ARB Meeting Minutes page 2.

[N.B. The Final report, with revisions as suggested was formally submitted to the Mayor's Office on 30 June 2017.]

Agenda item 3, Report on Bloomberg administration e-mail records:

Commissioner Toole reported that there had been progress since the previous meeting and that the Law Department had reviewed e-mail records for attorney/client privilege for the first three years of the Bloomberg administration. The Bloomberg.net e-mail records were being reviewed by outside counsel to segregate City-business from personal, prior to transfer to the Archives. Kiren Gopal added that the process will start with the former mayor and then his top assistants.

In closing the meeting Commissioner Toole asked if there were questions or other new business. None were expressed and the meeting was adjourned.

Archival Review Board
 September 27, 2017, 3:30 p.m.
 (via telephone conference call)
 Meeting Minutes

Participating: Members, Richard Lieberman, Kiren Gopal, and Christopher Moore;
 Commissioner Pauline Toole, Assistant Commissioner Kenneth Cobb, Municipal Archives
 Director Sylvia Kollar.

Agenda Item 1: Review and adopt minutes:

Commissioner Toole asked if there were any questions or comments regarding the May 11, 2017, ARB meeting minutes. None were voiced. She asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the May 11, 2017 meeting. The motion was approved.

Agenda Item 2: Archives Processing Projects Update:

-NEH-funded Health Commissioner Project

Ms. Kollar explained that project staff had been hired to process 831 cubic feet of records. They will prepare a folder-level inventory. They will update their progress via social media and write blog posts about “interesting” items they uncover in the collection.

Professor Lieberman commented that this would be useful for 4th grade curriculums.

-NY State-funded (LGRMIF) Map Inventory Project

Ms. Kollar announced that she was interviewing candidates for the inventory archivists. Professor Lieberman suggested that she reach out to Queens College—they have extensive experience with map collections. Ms. Kollar also noted that the archivists have adapted one of Columbia University’s map survey tools for the project.

-Intellectual Control Activities: ArchivesSpace and EAD finding aids

Ms. Kollar said that ArchivesSpace had been implemented and her staff was uploading databases and inventories. It will serve as the basis for collection-level descriptions of all collections. All taxonomies are according to current standard practice. Accession information should be completed and uploaded by March 2018.

Agenda item 3, Report on Bloomberg administration e-mail records:

Commissioner Toole reported that all of the former mayor’s emails (both received and sent) via Bloomberg.net during his 12-year term had been released to the Municipal Archives. The Archives has adopted an “on demand” policy for public access to this material while it is being processed. The processing archivists have received training from the Law Department in order to review the material for attorney/client privilege and will redact, as appropriate. The Archives is now pursuing the email records of other Bloomberg administration officials who used the Bloomberg.net service.

Professor Lieberman asked if the Archives had all the Bloomberg papers, video records and photographs. Commissioner Toole replied in the affirmative. Professor Lieberman added that more than 90% of the requests he received were for videos and photos. Commissioner Toole added that the photographs (image files) had not been identified or indexed by subject or name; they are organized by date only. Professor Lieberman suggested that the Archives reach out to a former Bloomberg administration official for assistance.

Agenda Item no. 4, New Exhibit: “*Unlikely Historians: Materials collected by NYPD surveillance teams, 1960-1975*”.

Commissioner Toole invited Board members to return for the upcoming public programming events held in connection with the exhibit.

In closing the meeting Commissioner Toole asked if there were questions or other new business. Mr. Chris Moore remarked that he thought the Department was doing a great job. No other comments were expressed and the meeting was adjourned.

Archival Review Board
 December 21, 2017, 2:00 p.m.
 (via telephone conference call)
 Meeting Minutes

Participating: Members, Richard Lieberman, Yasmin Ramirez, and Christopher Moore; Commissioner Pauline Toole, Assistant Commissioner Kenneth Cobb, Municipal Archives Director Sylvia Kollar. Commissioner Toole announced that member Kiren Gopal was leaving City service and would not be joining the call.

Agenda Item 1: Review and adopt minutes:

Assistant Commissioner Cobb asked if there were any questions or comments regarding the September 27, 2017, Archival Review Board meeting minutes. None were voiced. He asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the September 27, 2017 meeting. The motion was approved.

Agenda Item 2: Archives Processing Projects Update:

-NEH-funded Health Commissioner Project

Ms. Kollar said that the project was now fully staffed with two full-time archivists. To date, they have fully cataloged 140 cubic feet of records and had done an initial review of additional material. The processing archivists have written a blog post describing some of the interesting “finds” they have discovered in the collection. On December 27, the project team will be meeting with a reporter from Atlas Obscura, a publication that features history, science, and the environment.

Professor Lieberman requested a link to the blog post.

Commissioner Toole asked which was the largest series in the collection.

Ms. Kollar responded that it was Commissioner John Rice, who served during the Mayor LaGuardia administration from 1934 to 1942. She added that she will also forward background information about the project to the ARB members.

-NY State-funded (LGRMIF) Map Inventory Project

Ms. Kollar said two full-time archivists had been hired and commenced project activities in early December. So far they have surveyed and identified 3,420 maps. Their inventory includes date, location and condition information. Maps accessioned from the Board of Estimate, Department of Ports & Terminals, and the Department of Finance comprise some of the larger series. The Board of Estimate maps vary widely from minor drainage and street grading maps to items with much more significant content.

Commissioner Toole added that the First Deputy Mayor had recently launched a new project to create a sub-surface map the entire City. The pilot area was a section of Long Island City; representatives from DORIS are participating.

Professor Lieberman asked if this would be suitable for his students.

Commissioner Toole replied that she thought yes, but not just yet, as they were still compiling information but thought it could be useful and would follow the project progress.

Professor Lieberman asked what would be the final product.

Ms. Kollar replied that the survey results would inform next steps, e.g. digitization, conservation treatment, etc.

-Intellectual Control Activities: ArchivesSpace and EAD finding aids

Ms. Kollar said that 3,755 accession records were being edited for entry into ArchivesSpace; this work is a necessary step before collection-level descriptions can be added. The goal is to complete accession entry activities by the end of March 2018. In addition, the archivists are adding “agent” information, e.g. all named entities and individuals listed in the record. She mentioned “Civil Service Commission” as an example; patrons would then be able to search for all mentions of the Commission in any accession record. Previously, a researcher would need to search each record series separately.

Professor Lieberman asked if this would help identify 9/11-related records.

Ms. Kollar said probably not yet; Commissioner Toole said those items may eventually be located at the former mayor’s storage facility at 111 White Street. Ms. Kollar further explained that the ArchivesSpace information also includes predecessor and agency name changes over time; basically a “family tree” for each agency.

Ms. Kollar said the finding aid conversion to EAD was taking place in two waves—in the first phase, hand, or type-written inventories were being data-entered.

Agenda item 3, Report on Bloomberg administration e-mail records:

Commissioner Toole reiterated that all of the former mayor’s emails (both received and sent) via Bloomberg.net during his 12-year term had been released to the Municipal Archives. The Archives has adopted an “on demand” policy for public access to this material while it is being processed. She added that a former reporter for the New York Times, working on a biography of the former mayor has explored this series and has been “underwhelmed by its content.” The Archives is now pursuing the email records of other Bloomberg administration officials who used the Bloomberg.net service. The photograph and video files of the Bloomberg administration are being backed-up and will be available on-line. Commissioner Toole cited Professor Lieberman’s previous comment that patrons are more interested in photographs than any other archival materials.

Professor Lieberman suggested that benchmarks in projects should be celebrated; that the public should be informed of ‘look what we’ve done’ moments.

Yasmin Ramirez seconded that with a “great idea” comment.

Agenda Item no. 4, Update on New York Archival Society (NYAS) and Archives Reference and Research Advisory (AARAB):

Commissioner Toole explained that the New York Archival Society (NYAS) was the 501 c.3 organization founded by Paul O’Dwyer in 1976, anticipating that City-funding for the Municipal Archives would often not be adequate and an entity outside municipal government could be useful. The Society remained active through the 1980s, and subsequently served mainly as fiscal agent for grants to the agency. Commission Toole added that more recently the Society has a new Board and is in the process of re-energizing its commitment to the Municipal Archives. At an upcoming event, they will honor former DORIS Commissioner Idilio Gracia-Pena for his many years of service to the Archives and the agency.

Commissioner Toole also noted that the Archives Reference and Research Advisory Board (ARRAB), which was established in the Charter via the Local Law that created DORIS, has also been recently revived after many years of dormancy. The fifteen new members have been appointed by the Mayor. At their second quarterly meeting held on December 15, the members agreed to develop a mission statement. They will also facilitate travelling the current exhibit “Unlikely Historians” to venues such as the Bedford Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation.

Commissioner Toole alerted the Board members about the upcoming program—a panel discussion about documenting activism, to be held on January 4, 2018.

In closing the meeting Kenneth Cobb asked the members if any further business; none were voiced.

The call concluded at 2:30 p.m.

In closing the meeting Assisnat Commissioner Toole asked if there were questions or other new business. Mr. Chris Moore remarked that he thought the Department was doing a great job. No other comments were expressed and the meeting was adjourned.